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FOR NEA/IPA ANDREW LENTZ

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SUBJECT: FOLLOW UP ON BRAZIL'S SHARM AL SHEIKH PLEDGE

REF: STATE 020388

11. (U) On 10 March, poloff delivered reftel talking points to Counselor Claudio Cesar Nascimento, chief of the Middle East Division I of the Ministry of External Relations (MRE). Nascimento confirmed the USD 10 million pledge made by Foreign Minister Amorim at Sharm al-Sheikh, Egypt, and noted that it is subject to congressional approval, which is already being sought on an urgent basis. In addition to the USD 10 million, Brazil will also contribute another share through its portion of the IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) forum's pledge of about USD 1 million.

12. (U) Nascimento also said that there will be no pre-determined criteria for disbursement of the funds; instead it will be determined by agreements made between the Palestinian Authority and the Brazilian government that are still to be worked out. At least part of the funding likely will be provided in the form of food and medical aid or technical cooperation coordinated through the Brazilian Agency for Cooperation (equivalent to USAID). He noted that on the prior occasion when Brazil donated funds to the Palestinian Authority (Brazil pledged USD 10 million during the December 2007 Paris donors conference) the funding was quickly approved, so that by June of 2008 the funding had been completely disbursed to the Palestinians and used in the areas of education, agriculture and health. Nascimento added that MRE's intention is for the new pledge to be approved and disbursed with equal speed. (Note: The bill was introduced on March 2 and has been referred to several committees, where it awaits further action. The text of the bill places no strings on how the funding can be disbursed. End note.)
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